

PUBLIC WELFARE

Public welfare is basically a program of economic aid and casework services, available to every county of the United States.

CONSIDERATIONS

The two statutory programs under Federal law are Public Assistance and Child Welfare. Economic aid is given to needy families and individuals through four programs: Old Age Assistance, Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled, Aid to Dependent Children, and Aid to the Needy Blind. (In addition there is an extensive program of hospitalization for the indigent and medically indigent). Child Welfare services include protective casework for children who are dependent, neglected, delinquent or in danger of becoming delinquent. Foster home care, placement in institutions, and placement in adoption, including the study of applications from families who wish to adopt are all part of the Child Welfare program. Such services as appropriate, are available to people in all walks of life.

Homemaker service is included in the programs of some counties as a constructive way of helping to hold families together during a crisis, of helping parents learn to manage more effectively in areas of child care and household management, and of helping the aged to remain in their own homes when physical disability might otherwise make institutional placement necessary. This is a desirable service not presently available in the Pasquotank County Department of Public Welfare.

Many counties, including Pasquotank County, also have the responsibility of certifying need when application is made for surplus commodities. Not all counties participate in this program, but it is an effective and economical way for the county to help marginal families maintain more adequate levels of basic nutrition.

In North Carolina, the County Departments of Public Welfare also have responsibility for the following services, among others: issuance of work permits to minors, supervision of parolees from penal institutions, planning for persons who can be released from State Mental hospitals, studies, and supervision of foster homes for children, service to the Juvenile Courts in relation to study and supervision of juvenile delinquents, and provision of General Assistance when the family or individual does not meet eligibility requirements for economic assistance under one of the four categories. It is always the policy of public welfare to make every effort to help people in such a way that their problems may be resolved and the family returned as quickly as possible to self-support. Even though, for some groups as the aged and the totally disabled, economic assistance is necessary on a continuing basis, and is a responsibility assumed by a compassionate society for its weaker and less fortunate members, there are also families for whom misfortunate is a tide that can be turned with skillful help applied in such a way as to help families help themselves. This is the basic responsibility of public welfare.